



NORTHWESTERN ONTARIO WOMEN'S CENTRE  
EMPOWERING WOMEN BY PROVIDING A SAFE AND SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENT TO EXPLORE THEIR NEEDS

## feminist DISPATCH

The Northwestern Ontario Women's Centre is a non-profit, community-based feminist organization in Thunder Bay, Ontario. We work with self-identified women to increase their access to knowledge, skills and resources so they can make informed choices.



## February is Black History Month

In Canada, we celebrate **Black History Month** each February because **Jean Augustine**, the first African Canadian woman elected to Parliament, made a motion in 1995 that passed unanimously.

At the Women's Centre, we are committed to accountable anti-racism, to listening and learning from people who are the experts of their own experiences, and to directing our privilege and power toward an equitable future.

In keeping with the theme for Black History Month 2025, "**Black Legacy and Leadership: Celebrating Canadian History and Uplifting Future Generations**", we're focused on learning directly from stories, podcasts, and articles by Black feminists, activists, scholars, journalists, and artists. Join us in exploring and celebrating the invaluable critical perspectives and creative contributions of Black women and gender-diverse people - this month and every month!

### Some of the history of Black Women's activism and advocacy in Canada:

- **Black Women in the Women's Movement** (*RiseUp Feminist Archive*)

- [Black Canadian Feminists and Trailblazers You Should Know About](#) (*YWCA Vancouver*, 2021)
- [Black Feminist Activism in the 20th Century](#) (*Heritage Toronto*, 2024)
- [The legacy and impact of Black Canadian women's organizations](#) (*Canadian Heritage*, 2023)

### Articles, Essays, Films, Podcasts & Interviews

- [Don't Call Me Resilient \(EP 1\): What's in a word? How to confront 150 years of racial stereotypes](#) featuring Cheryl Thompson, Assistant Professor, Creative Industries, Toronto Metropolitan University, and author of [Uncle](#)
- [Celebrating Black Joy Through Storytelling](#) (*The Agenda with Steve Paikin*, February 15, 2022)
- Syrus Marcus Ware & adrienne maree brown: [The Pleasures of "Post-Binary" Community](#) (*Them*, November 2022)
- [Writing Myself into Existence: An Essay on the Erasure of Black Indigenous Identity in Canadian Education](#) (Etanda Arden, *The Yellowhead Institute*, January 28, 2021)
- [Q&A: Author Robyn Maynard on Anti-Black Racism, Misogyny, and Policing in Canada](#) (Canadian Women's Foundation, 2018)
- [Black History Month: How to Make February Matter](#) (Dr. Cheryl Thompson, 2024)
- [Sisters in the Struggle](#) (Directed by Dionne Brand & Ginny Stikeman, NFB 1991)

— “ —

There is no such thing as a single-issue struggle because we do not live single-issue lives.

Audre Lorde, "Learning from the 60s" (1982)

— ” —

**"There is no such thing as a single-issue struggle because we do not live single-issue lives"**

Read the full speech delivered by Audre Lorde at Harvard in 1982: ["Learning from the 60s"](#)

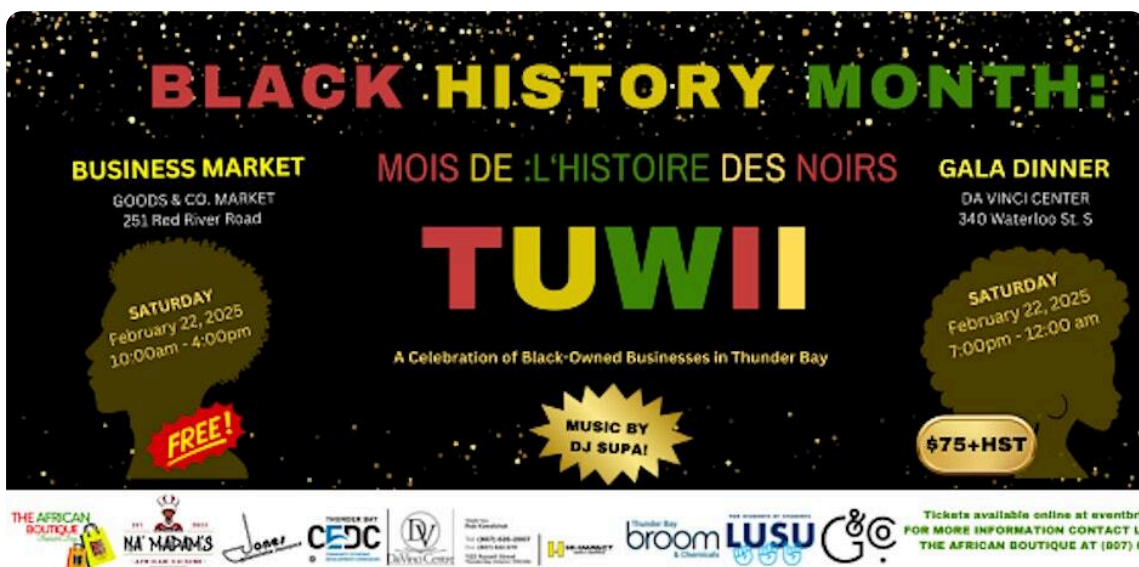


## Black & Gold Dance Party Fundraiser!

Join **Dame Más Dance** on February 7th at Norteños Taqueria (698 Arthur St. W) for a dance fundraiser in celebration of Black History Month and in support of Sisters for Canadian Black Community! The night starts off with a beginner dance lesson to get everyone warmed up before the party starts! Tickets are \$10 in advance or \$15 at the door.

**Sisters for Canadian Black Community** is a charitable organization whose mission is to work with community members to improve, encourage, and enrich the lives of people with African heritage through cultural activities. They also help new immigrants to Thunder Bay with housing, medical care, legal assistance, development of language and communication skills, citizenship and sponsorship of family members, and welfare concerns.

Get your tickets today!



## TUWII - Black Owned Business Market & Dinner Gala

Celebrate Black culture, creativity, and entrepreneurship during Black History Month on February 22nd with two wonderful events:

- **Black-Owned Business Market** at the Goods & Co. Market (251 Red River Rd.) from 10am – 4pm. Come discover unique items, support local entrepreneurs, and connect with the community. Whether you're looking for art, fashion, beauty products, or delicious treats, you'll find it all here!
- **TUWII Dinner Gala & Dance** at the Da Vinci Centre (340 Waterloo St. S) starts at 7pm. A night of elegance, entertainment and celebration of Black excellence in our community, with music by DJ SUPA! Tickets \$75.00+HST each

Find more information and get your Gala tickets here!

## Events & Programming updates from NWOC

### Save the Date: IWD Flag raising

Friday, March 7th @ 10am



Join us at City Hall on **Friday, March 7th** to raise the flag! Opening remarks at 10am (speaker TBD). Flag will be raised around 10:30am.

Please feel welcome to stay for light refreshments following the flag raising.

## Courting Change: An introduction to Feminist Strategic Litigation

*February Workshop for workers, advocates in the GBV and Social Justice sector*

The Northwestern Ontario Women's Centre has invited **LEAF (Women's Legal Education & Action Fund)** to deliver a Feminist Strategic Litigation workshop in Thunder Bay.

This workshop will be held on **February 11th from 1-3pm at Centre Francophone (234 Van Norman St)**. Please contact Steph at [communications@nwowc.org](mailto:communications@nwowc.org) for registration details; registration closes on February 4th.

## COURTING CHANGE:

### An introduction to Feminist Strategic Litigation

February 11th | 1-3 pm @ Centre Francophone  
presented by



WOMEN'S LEGAL  
EDUCATION & ACTION FUND  
FONDS D'ACTION ET D'ÉDUCATION  
JURIDIQUE POUR LES FEMMES

In this workshop, we will focus on:

- What feminist strategic litigation is
- Why you might want to engage in it
- What that engagement looks like

The workshop is primarily geared towards workers at GBV and social justice organizations

Participants will learn about feminist strategic litigation, a systems-change strategy that brings gender-based violence (GBV) advocates and legal professionals together to improve outcomes for survivors.

**Virtual and in-person attendance options are available.**

**We will have snacks available for in-person participants, including vegan, nut-free, and gluten-free options.**

**We will make best efforts to accommodate all access needs.**

If you have any access needs or any food allergies or restrictions, please email Kat Owens by Tuesday, February 4: [k.owens@leaf.ca](mailto:k.owens@leaf.ca)

## What is Feminist Strategic Litigation?

Feminist strategic litigation is feminist lawyering on feminist issues with feminist goals. While people usually engage in feminist strategic litigation through an individual court case, the strategic reason for getting involved is the potential to push for broader change that goes beyond that individual case – change to legislation, policies, and practices by centering and building on the expertise of communities. The use of feminist strategic litigation by organizations working on issues related to gender-based violence can have a significant effect on gender-based violence prevention and response. It can also empower the communities they serve.

## About our Presenters



WOMEN'S LEGAL  
EDUCATION & ACTION FUND  
FONDS D'ACTION ET D'ÉDUCATION  
JURIDIQUE POUR LES FEMMES

Who is standing up for the rights of women in Canada? **The Women's Legal Education and Action Fund.** Since 1985, LEAF has intervened in over 100 landmark legal cases that have advanced gender equality in Canada. Their work has resulted in various levels of court victories preventing violence against women and gender diverse people, eliminating discrimination in the workplace, allowing access to reproductive freedoms, and providing better maternity benefits, better spousal support, and the right to pay equity. Charter rights, in general, and section 15, in particular, have been tested, and strengthened, through the advocacy work of LEAF.

**You can be part of this systemic/ groundbreaking work by understanding how strategic litigation works, and by bringing forward the issues you are working on with individual women!**

## ABOUT OUR PRESENTERS & THE WORKSHOP FOCUS

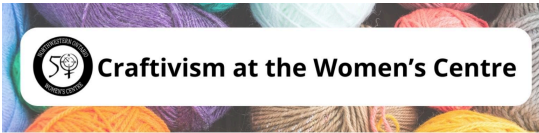
*Feminist strategic litigation* is feminist lawyering on feminist issues with feminist goals. While people usually engage in feminist strategic litigation through an individual court case, the *strategic* reason for getting involved is the potential to push for broader change that goes beyond that individual case – change to legislation, policies, and practices by centering and building on the expertise of communities.

Who is standing up for the rights of women in Canada? **The Women's Legal Education and Action Fund.** Since 1985, LEAF has intervened in over 100 landmark legal cases that have advanced gender equality in Canada. Their work has resulted in various levels of court victories preventing violence against women and gender diverse people, eliminating discrimination in the workplace, allowing access to reproductive freedoms, and providing better maternity benefits, better spousal support, and the right to pay equity. *Charter* rights, in general, and section 15, in particular, have been tested, and strengthened, through the advocacy work of LEAF.



## Craftivism at the Women's Centre





## Celebrating National Embroidery Month with an EMBROIDERY STITCH-ALONG

**THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 13th from 1 - 4 pm**  
to learn the basic stitches to complete a take-home embroidery project!



Each participant will receive a stitch-along kit with supplies; come make a HEART stitch sampler with us!

### ABOUT OUR FACILITATOR

Steph Simko is the resident book nerd and embroidery artist of Owl Eyes Arts. She creates unique hand embroideries dedicated to a deep love of literature, fantasy, and whimsy. As an avid reader and nature enthusiast, Steph is passionate about reclaiming embroidery for modern uses that are sustainably minded.

Contact Lori [admin@nwowc.org](mailto:admin@nwowc.org) or 935-8043 to attend!

## Celebrate National Embroidery Month! February Stitch-Along

Join us **THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 13th** from 1 - 4 pm to learn some basic embroidery stitches to work on a take-home project!

Each participant will receive a stitch-along kit with supplies; come make a HEART stitch sampler with us!

Contact Lori [admin@nwowc.org](mailto:admin@nwowc.org) or 807-935-8043 to attend.

## ABOUT OUR ARTIST FACILITATOR

Steph Simko is the resident book nerd and embroidery artist of **Owl Eyes Arts**. She creates unique hand embroideries dedicated to a deep love of literature, fantasy, and whimsy. As an avid reader and nature enthusiast, Steph is passionate about reclaiming embroidery for modern uses that are sustainably minded.

## Clay Collective NWO

Big thanks to the **Clay Collective** for choosing us to receive the proceeds from their annual Ornament Fundraiser!

They delivered a cheque for **\$743!**  
We are grateful for their support!



## February Orders

Order your GFB from your host site by **February 10th**  
PICK UP from your host site on **February 19th**

| 2025 Order Schedule   |   | FIND US ONLINE!   |   |
|---|---|---|---|
| <b>JANUARY</b><br>Su Mo Tu We Th Fr Sa<br>1 2 3 4<br>5 6 7 8 9 10 11<br>12 13 14 15 16 17 18<br>19 20 21 22 23 24 25<br>26 27 28 29 30 31<br>Order by Jan 6th to pick up your box on the 15th | <b>FEBRUARY</b><br>Su Mo Tu We Th Fr Sa<br>1 2 3 4 5<br>6 7 8 9 10 11<br>12 13 14 15 16 17 18<br>19 20 21 22 23 24 25<br>26 27 28 29<br>Order by Feb 10th to pick up your box on the 19th | <b>JULY</b><br>Su Mo Tu We Th Fr Sa<br>1 2 3 4 5<br>6 7 8 9 10 11 12<br>13 14 15 16 17 18 19<br>20 21 22 23 24 25 26<br>27 28 29 30 31<br>Order by July 7th to pick up your box on the 16th   | <b>AUGUST</b><br>Su Mo Tu We Th Fr Sa<br>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9<br>10 11 12 13 14 15 16<br>17 18 19 20 21 22 23<br>24 25 26 27 28 29 30<br>Order by Aug 11th to pick up your box on the 20th     |
| <b>MARCH</b><br>Su Mo Tu We Th Fr Sa<br>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8<br>9 10 11 12 13 14 15<br>16 17 18 19 20 21 22<br>23 24 25 26 27 28 29<br>30 31<br>Order by Mar 16th to pick up your box on the 15th  | <b>APRIL</b><br>Su Mo Tu We Th Fr Sa<br>1 2 3 4 5<br>6 7 8 9 10 11 12<br>13 14 15 16 17 18 19<br>20 21 22 23 24 25 26<br>27 28 29 30<br>Order by Apr 7th to pick up your box on the 16th  | <b>SEPTEMBER</b><br>Su Mo Tu We Th Fr Sa<br>1 2 3 4 5 6<br>7 8 9 10 11 12 13<br>14 15 16 17 18 19 20<br>21 22 23 24 25 26 27<br>28 29 30<br>Order by Sept 8th to pick up your box on the 17th | <b>OCTOBER</b><br>Su Mo Tu We Th Fr Sa<br>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11<br>12 13 14 15 16 17 18<br>19 20 21 22 23 24 25<br>26 27 28 29 30 31<br>Order by Oct 6th to pick up your box on the 15th  |
| <b>MAY</b><br>Su Mo Tu We Th Fr Sa<br>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10<br>11 12 13 14 15 16 17<br>18 19 20 21 22 23 24<br>25 26 27 28 29 30 31<br>Order by May 12th to pick up your box on the 21st       | <b>JUNE</b><br>Su Mo Tu We Th Fr Sa<br>1 2 3 4 5 6 7<br>8 9 10 11 12 13 14<br>15 16 17 18 19 20 21<br>22 23 24 25 26 27 28<br>29 30<br>Order by June 9th to pick up your box on the 18th  | <b>NOVEMBER</b><br>Su Mo Tu We Th Fr Sa<br>1 2 3 4 5 6 7<br>8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15<br>16 17 18 19 20 21 22<br>23 24 25 26 27 28 29<br>30<br>Order by Nov 10th to pick up your box on the 19th  | <b>DECEMBER</b><br>Su Mo Tu We Th Fr Sa<br>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13<br>14 15 16 17 18 19 20<br>21 22 23 24 25 26 27<br>28 29 30 31<br>Order by Dec 8th to pick up your box on the 17th |

With a new year ahead, we have the 2025 GFB Order schedule available!

Get your 2025 Order Schedule



**COMING SOON!**

HEADS UP! Survey time is coming




**THIS MONTH: the GFB survey is back!**

It's time again for the Good Food Box Survey! This is our biennial evaluation to determine the impact we have on our community, track the changes and development of food security issues, and gather feedback on any areas we need to improve in to best deliver this program. We will be gathering feedback and information from our customers, our host sites, and our volunteers.

The survey will be launched on our **NEXT PACK DAY (FEBRUARY 19TH)**. Please be prepared to take time at the February pick up to complete your Customer survey. Thanks in advance for your cooperation and participation!

**SEED SALE**

in partnership with **Root Cellar Gardens** in support of the



**POPPI - PURPLE FRILLY**  
showy flowers | big pods

regionally adapted organic seed for short growing seasons



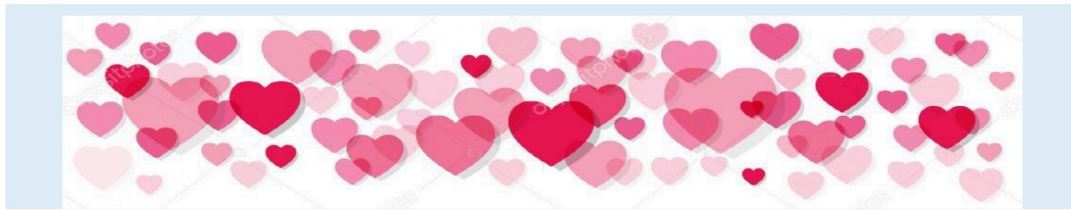
**GOOD FOOD BOX**

**Do you grow flowers, or looking to begin growing?**

We are selling packets of seeds in partnership with Root Cellar Gardens! All proceeds support the GFB Program!

If you are interested in more organic seeds and vegetable offerings, check out **Root Cellar Gardens!**

Order your SEEDS today



## 18<sup>th</sup> Annual VALENTINE'S Day MMIWGMB2S+ Memorial Walk



→ **FEBRUARY 13<sup>TH</sup> at 5:00 p.m.**  
**INTERCITY MALL**

### WHEN?

Opening Ceremony & Prayer **5:00pm.** then walk to Sacred Fire at floodway.

### WHERE?

Intercity Mall, The Bannock Lady, to the Neebing Floodway *Scan here for map details:*



February 13th marks the anniversary of the death and unsolved murder of Sandra Johnson, 18, fancy shall dancer, who was found on the Neebing-McIntyre floodway in 1992.

*In memory of  
Sandra Kaye  
Johnson*

Please share widely,  
all are welcome



**ALL HAND DRUMMERS  
WELCOME!**

Light refreshments provided at **The Bannock Lady**. Walk will proceed through mall, outside through to Main Street to floodway to the Sacred Fire, where tobacco and prayer may be offered. Cedar tea available at fire.

\*The Bannock Lady will remain open for those returning from Sacred Fire for continued community.

The 18th annual Valentine's Day MMIWGMB2S+ Memorial Walk is being held on **Thursday, February 13th** at Intercity Mall. Join for the Opening Ceremony and Prayer at 5pm, followed by a walk through the mall and outdoor to the Sacred Fire at the floodway. Light refreshments provided by The Bannock Lady.

February 13th marks the anniversary of the death and unsolved murder of Sandra Johnson, 18, fancy shall dancer, who was found on the Neebing McIntyre floodway in 1992.



- **February 4th & 5th | Western University's Centre for Research & Education on Violence against Women and Children** is hosting their Virtual Forum next month, entitled "Seeds of Possibility: Understanding Alternative Justice Practices in the Gender-Based Violence Sector". This two-day Virtual Forum will take place on February 4th and 5th, 2025 from 1 - 4 pm Eastern Time. [Register](#) online and check out their [website](#) for more details
- **February 7th | Black & Gold Dance Party** (see details & poster above!)
- **Feb 13th | 18th Annual Valentine's Day MMIWGB2S+ Memorial Walk** begins at 5pm at InterCity Mall.
- **February 22nd | Black History Month Dinner + Entrepreneur Event** (see details & poster above!)

## RESOURCES

- **Independent Living Resource Centre** (ILRC) has launched a Community Lending Library of free rentals of air-purifying equipment to help make public events safer and more accessible. See their [full poster](#) for details!
- **P.A.C.E. Warming Centre** is now open every day: weekdays from 7:30am - 7pm and weekends from 9am - 7pm
- **Grace Place** is open 1-4pm on Mon, Tues, Wed for a hot meal in a warm place.
- **The Care Bus** is operating 7 days a week from 1m-9pm, following its usual route. Contact 807-630-8631 for more information or to reach a harm reduction outreach worker on the bus
- **CLEO** has shared updates on family status protection at work. Here is updated [Steps to Justice](#) information about workers' rights when caring for a family member
- **ABORSH**, a podcast about abortion in Canada, explores what "choice" really means and looks like, and why that answer is different for different people. Their second season has begun, with weekly episodes available

## Gender Based Violence: We Can Help

**Our Gender Based Violence Navigation Advocate provides support for women who are experiencing (or at risk of experiencing) physical and/or sexual violence or coercive control by a partner, family member or acquaintance. Women navigating various court systems may also access court advocacy.**

We can help by:

- Ensuring that women who are experiencing or at high risk of gender-based violence have access to ongoing and appropriate support and referrals
- Coordinating with Violence Against Women service providers to ensure that critical information is shared
- Assisting with preparing for court
- Ensuring coordination between legal sectors (criminal, family, immigration etc.)
- Providing court accompaniment and emotional support

This service is intended to enhance the effectiveness of the existing VAW response, not duplicate or replace it. For more information or to make a referral, contact Jennifer at [navigator@nwowc.org](mailto:navigator@nwowc.org) or by phone (807) 935-8042.

## Sexual Violence Program: Supporting Survivors



### Sexual Violence Program

Our Sexual Violence Program supports self-identified women aged 16+ who have experienced any form of sexual violence in person or online: sexual abuse, sexual assault, sexual harassment, non-consensual distribution of intimate images, stalking or sex trafficking.

We aim to provide survivors with:

- a space to be heard, believed, and supported
- legal and systems advocacy, when appropriate
- free supportive counselling and other resources to rebuild their lives from the negative impacts of sexual violence

[www.fayepeterson.org](http://www.fayepeterson.org)

SVP supports available at no cost:

- 24/7 crisis line: (807) 345-0450
- 10-week support groups
- Accompaniments (hospital, police, court), where appropriate
- Advocacy
- Referrals
- Public education
- 20-week individual counselling offered at two locations:
  - Faye Peterson House (807) 345-0450
  - Northwestern Ontario Women's Centre (807) 620-9156

Our SVP is designed to serve the diverse experiences of members of our communities, including, but not limited to, Indigenous/Metis/Inuit, 2-Spirited, non-binary, LGBTQ, Black/racialized, disabled, sex workers, and sex trafficking survivors.



For more details about all of our programs and services, please visit:

[www.fayepeterson.org](http://www.fayepeterson.org)



In partnership with:  
Northwestern Ontario Women's Centre

[www.nwowomenscentre.org](http://www.nwowomenscentre.org)



**NORTHWESTERN ONTARIO WOMEN'S CENTRE**  
EMPOWERING WOMEN BY PROVIDING A SAFE AND SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENT TO EXPLORE THEIR NEEDS

To help meet the needs of survivors since the Thunder Bay Sexual Abuse Centre closed, Faye Peterson House has developed a Sexual Violence Program. There are three Sexual Violence Counsellors offering a 20-week individual counselling program. Two counsellors are based at the shelter, and one is based here at the Northwestern Ontario Women's Centre where there is now a private counselling room for this purpose.

If you're interested in counselling at the Women's Centre location or the Support Group meetings, you can reach Stacey Hare Hodgins (BA, HBSW, MA, RSW) directly at (807) 620-9156 or [sharehodgins@fayepeterson.org](mailto:sharehodgins@fayepeterson.org).

To access counselling for any kind of sexual violence (recent or past), you can call Faye Peterson House's 24/7 Crisis Line: (807) 345-0450. You do not need to reside at the shelter to

## Mutual Aid Opportunity

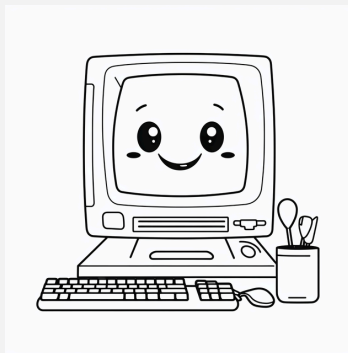


While we continue to advocate for changes to policies and practices that make women disproportionately vulnerable to violence and poverty, we know that access to some basic material items can still be helpful. We also recognize the importance of taking care of one another, and we know that many NOWC supporters might appreciate an opportunity to extend support to women in our community in other ways. Informed by our conversations with women who visit the Centre, these items would be especially helpful lately:

- **adult monthly bus pass**
- new socks
- Fresh Co. or Tim Hortons gift cards
- mini first aid kits (or packs of Band-Aids)
- toothbrushes, toothpaste, floss, lip balm
- sunscreen
- sun hats
- menstrual pads (light or regular)
- Poise pads (for incontinence)

If you'd like to donate any of these items, please drop by the Women's Centre (M-Th between 9:30am and 5pm) or get in touch with Steph to make alternate arrangements: [communications@nwowc.org](mailto:communications@nwowc.org).

## Computer Resources Available



Women can access a computer or video conferencing at the Women's Centre for:

- Printing forms
- Job Interviews
- Virtual Legal Clinic
- Lawyer's Appointments
- Virtual Court Matters

To book an appointment, please contact Jennifer at 935-8042 or [navigator@nwowc.org](mailto:navigator@nwowc.org)

## Contribute to the Feminist Dispatch!

Submit a photo of your original artwork, a short piece of writing, a helpful resource, or a link to a community event that aligns with our **mission!** All newsletter-related inquiries and submissions can be directed to [communications@nwowc.org](mailto:communications@nwowc.org).

**Helping Women Find Their Way Since 1973!**

The Northwestern Ontario Women's Centre relies on government funding and private donations to continue our work. We gratefully acknowledge the support of volunteers, donors, and the Investing in Women's Future Program of the Ontario Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services, Women and Gender Equality (WAGE) Canada, Canadian Women's Foundation, and the Johnson Scholarship Foundation.

Support Our Work

[AAGBV](#) [Advocacy](#) [Good Food Box](#) [Public Education](#) [What's New](#)



**Northwestern Ontario Women's Centre**

73 Cumberland St. N., Thunder Bay, ON P7A 4L8

(807) 345-7802 | [ed@nwowc.org](mailto:ed@nwowc.org)

[www.nwowomenscentre.org](http://www.nwowomenscentre.org)



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